

March 5, 2015

To: Co-chairs of the Appropriations Committee
Senator Beth Bye and Representative Toni Walker

I am writing to express my opposition to proposed cuts in the budgets of the Connecticut Mental Health Center. These cuts would be harmful to a facility and programs that are state and national resources. The cuts are short-sighted and also counterproductive from a financial perspective. Research and mental health treatment can avoid far greater expenditures for the costs of mental health issues ignored or untreated.

My own history illustrates the financial value of CMHC and these programs. I was recruited to a position at CMHC from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), from which I could have chosen positions from top Universities in the country. After a few years at CMHC, I received prestigious "Career Scientist" support from NIMH and the National Institute of Drug Abuse for 20 years that allowed me to concentrate on my research activities, among which was the discovery of a now widely used drug for opiate withdrawal, mechanisms of anxiety and drug withdrawal, and more recently, have become a pioneer in the field of cellular therapies for Parkinson's disease and stem cell research. Although I am no longer at CMHC, I have remained at Yale and in Connecticut. During my career, with the teams that I have assembled, I have brought almost \$100,000,000 in NIH and non-state grant funding and research activities to the State of Connecticut.

I am just an example of dozens of investigators whose work has produced economic and intellectual benefits for Connecticut. Without my recruitment by CMHC, I would likely have spent my career at Harvard, University of Chicago, or Stanford, where I had job offers.

Research is a difficult and slow activity, requiring many years of specialized training, state of the art equipment, resources, and staffing. This means that serious cuts in funding destroy research capabilities that then take many years to restore. This seems especially tragic so soon after the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission recommended renewed investment in mental health services.

In summary, I hope that the Appropriations Committee will find ways to avoid these damaging cuts.

Sincerely,

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